1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[ARCHERS]

[P.190-C]

some individual among Toré's children. In his anger he closes the forest so that the hunters can kill no game. Under the circumstances all the weapons in the camp are brought out and placed in a pile in the center of the clearing. The hunters stand around in a circle, each with an arm held over the weapons. As described by Schebesta, the transgressor, who had divided game he had caught without waiting for the elder, brandished a live chicken over the center of the circle praying for success in the hunt. In the invocation he mentioned Bali (local name for the God of the Undergrowth), "fathers," "grandfathers," and the name of his own father who had apparently been an outstanding hunter. Then the elder cut off the head of the chicken, sprinkled blood on the weapons and the arms of the hunters, and threw the fluttering carcass onto the ground. Everyone watched which way it moved, and when it finally fell with the stump of its neck pointing toward the forest, this was taken as a good omen and there was a [787].

782
776
224

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

[CP.236-C]

complete documentation places it in the realm of hypothesis rather than fact.

The Chthonic God

Schebesta does not specify whether the particular Mbuti from whom he collected most of his Sua material are net hunters or archers. But, except for his remarks on the Kango and "village Sua" (1952, 49, footnote, 301) to the extreme west of the Ituri forest, he seems to have drawn largely on the southeastern Mbuti. His information (1950, 14–24) does not differ greatly from that for the archers. The names given to the divinity are Mu(n)gu, Keti, Kalisia, and So(n)ge. Epulu net hunters also loosely use the term Mungu, as do the neighboring villagers. According to Schebesta, Kalisia is the lord of the forest and game, and patron of the hunters, whom he loves. They owe everything to him. Above all, he is a benevolent God, helping the Mbuti in the hunt, guiding their weapons and assisting the beat, preceding the beaters and opening the trail. He is also the lord of dreams, making his wishes known to the elder, telling the hunter where to find game.

1: Turnbull P-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[P. 261-C]

They went off into the Forest together. The one man lived with his wife, but time went by and still they had no children. The other Pygmy saw this and decided that he would go to the main hunting camp. There he found another woman. He lived with her, and in due course a child was born. The Pygmy ran to his friend in the Forest in great joy, and told him the news. His friend immediately left the Forest and also lived with the woman in the hunting camp. They too had a child. And that is how Pygmies began, and how they became so plentiful. 539

Bazi

Another legend tells how two brothers fought over an ax.

One was killed, so the other said to his nephews and nieces: "See, I have killed your father. From now on, your family and mine are enemies. We will live apart; you will live over there and I will live here." And they parted forever.

That, a social anthropologist might say, was the beginning of fission and fusion.

But apart from this, and one legend telling how a great dreamer dreamed and was told how the Pygmies should make nets out of *nkusa* vine and hunt with nets, the remainder of legends dealing with the traditional past refer to relationship with the villagers, a subject of much more interest to the Mbuti. 539 177 787.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

craft or to a breach of marital taboos, as indeed are any disasters, natural or unnatural, that befall the couple. The Mbuti, not having any traditional means of divination, are considered by the villagers to be dependent on them for help, though a few Mbuti have learned the art and become quite highly respected by the villagers. Sometimes if villagers come to hear of a marital dispute within a band, they will try to settle it by reference to divination, and if so the Mbuti appear to accept the settlement without question, in the village, but in no way allow it to impinge upon the reality of the situation in the forest. So once again the only dependency that exists is in the minds of the villagers.

DEATH

Even when it comes to the greatest crisis of all, death, the Mbuti seem to accept all the externals of village ritual but none of the implications. The invariable accusation of witchcraft and the equally invariable mention of supernatural sanctions as an alternative cause of death are made to remind the Mbuti not to falter in fulfilling their obligations to their *kpara*. Village insistence upon the unnatural causes of death serves to sow enough seeds of doubt in the mind of the Mbuti to cause at least momentary fear.

The actual ritual of burial is conducted under strict village supervision, the necessary payments being made by the *kpara*. The *kpara* and his family, as well as many other villagers, attend personally in the procession to the grave, and the *kpara* is almost certain to take a prominent part in the subsequent discussion as to the cause of the death and be present at the divination, if one is held. But whereas the Mbuti generally subject themselves to village ritual with the best of grace, they become quickly impatient following the burial of the dead and sometimes simply walk out of the *baraza* where the cause of death is being determined, leaving it entirely to the villagers to decide whatever pleases them. The village preoccupation with death and its unnatural causes disquiets the Mbuti, and when an Mbuti dies in a village there is frequently voiced suspicion that somehow the village is responsible; maybe one of the old curses is at work, perhaps a neglected *kpara* is employing a sorcerer to seek revenge, or, more likely, it is impersonally simply the village itself that caused the death.

Among themselves the Mbuti do not bother to settle the question, if they ask it, but if they feel that the village is to blame in some un-

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[P.181]

CHAPTER 11

Government: Internal

INTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS

Before attempting to understand the over-all system of government in Mbuti society, it is necessary to distinguish between different fields of authority, for each field of activity has its own leaders, drawn from a particular segment of the community. It is in this way that authority is dispersed throughout the band; every adult is accorded special respect in one field or another, but none can claim respect in all fields. Individual authority is unthinkable, and not only are there no chiefs or headmen in Mbuti society; there are not even any councils of elders or any ritual specialists such as prophets or diviners. Such adults as have respect in any particular field at any particular moment do not even have any authority; they can merely claim to be heard. Their decision is likely to be given general assent and, as in economic matters, that decision is then said to be "good," and "pleasing" to the forest. The forest personified as a benevolent divinity remains as the only recognized authority, one which sometimes expresses its feelings with unmistakable clarity; an excessive storm, falling trees, poor hunting and ill health may all be taken as signs of displeasure, while good weather and good health and good hunting are indications that all is well. But often the forest remains silent. Then the Mbuti have to sound its feelings out through discussion. Dreams may be taken into account, but there is no question of waiting for visible signs of the forest's pleasure. The delegation of authority is clear; the decision of the whole band, the very fact of unanimity, is sufficient sign of the favor of the forest. There is always diversity of opinion, freely expressed, but prolonged disagreement is considered as "noise," and offensive to the forest. Unanimity, therefore, is a powerful and positive value, equated with the opposite to noise—quiet, or *ekimi*.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

sion, during which any latent dispute might be aired. I could not definitely trace any heightening of reciprocal prestations between the individuals concerned, but it could have taken place in divers ways without my knowing it.

12. A number of disputes arising over food indicate trivial domestic disagreements, and seldom reach major proportions. A wife is late in cooking her husband's food, or cooks it badly; he spills some precious oil or fails to catch any game on the hunt. Such disagreements are confined almost entirely to the younger married couples, and they usually settle them by beating each other. If the beating gets too severe then the older women intervene, slapping both boys and girls soundly. If a marital dispute is more serious it may still emerge through a trivial incident in the hopes that it will be settled peacefully. If it is ignored, or mistaken as another petty squabble, then a more serious incident has to be created.

Baumbao, Tungana's eldest son, was having trouble with his wife, Tabakali. She was frequently away, back with her parents, and was suspected of having innumerable liaisons with other men. Baumbao said that this was particularly bad because of the *molimo* that was going on at the time. She had changed her hearth when she married him, and was now a member of this hearth, and she had to contribute to the *molimo*. He first brought the issue up simply by accusing her of cooking badly, and slapping her so hard that an old widow intervened, hitting Baumbao on the back with a burning log. Then everyone agreed that Tabakali was indeed a bad cook but that Baumbao knew that when he married her.

Baumbao took drastic measures. He took down the baskets full of offerings to the *molimo* from the *molimo* hearth, uprooted the sticks and the vine marking the site, and threw the lot onto the ground. While doing this he was busily saying that the *molimo* was empty. He said he had dreamed that his dead sister, Beselinda (naming her), had appeared to him in a dream and told him it was time someone made a good *molimo* trumpet and stopped using drainpipes.[1] She told him to make one and, having made it, to use it and then keep it carefully and not let it rot. He had done this and had been supplying

[1] As described elsewhere (Turnbull, 1961), the Mbuti on one occasion made use of some metal drainpiping they found in the local administrative center. Recognizing its musical potentialities, they stole two lengths and used them as *molimo* trumpets. Everyone agreed that the main thing was that the sound was undeniably good, but the more conservative elements strongly felt the lack of the identity between the conventional trumpet (made of a forest wood) and the forest itself.

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1956) 1962 PO4 Pygmies PO4
Mbuti

QOO spot a telltale movement first. Kenge's eyes were sharper, but he was seldom able to identify anything that was more than a few hundred yards away, whereas Henri could tell at several miles.

Everywhere the view was different, and Kenge was as fascinated by this constant change as he was by the abundance of game. The sun shone warmly in a clear sky, but the Ruwenzori had hidden themselves once more in a bank of cloud. Looking at them from the north side of the park we could see only the forest-covered lower slopes.

[187] All at once Kenge said, "I dreamed of my mother last night, and of my wife Maliamo. My mother was crying for me."

I asked him if he wanted to stay another day or so in the park, or go back, and he said he wanted to go back just as soon as he could. When we got back to the guest houses we heard that the superintendent was on his way, so we decided to leave at once rather than have any arguments as to whether it was better for a white man to eat in the kitchen with a Pygmy, or a Pygmy to eat in the dining room with white men. Henri returned with us to the entrance to the park, where he and Kenge said a fond farewell, Kenge giving him some of our stock of rice as a present.

Where the road leaves the heights above the plains and crosses over to the forest plateau, we stopped the car and got out to have a last look. The scene was at its most beautiful, and I waited for several minutes while Kenge took it all in, shaking his head and clucking his tongue in amazement. When he spoke all he said was, "The *Pire* Longo was right, this God must be the same as our God in the forest. It must be one God."

Our homeward trip was a triumphant one. Kenge sang loudly as we got farther and farther into the forest. He was so happy to be back that he forgot temporarily about his mother and Maliamo, and himself suggested stopping in several places, which we did.